



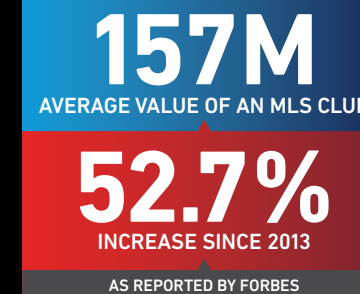
**21<sup>ST</sup> SEASON**

**2016**

# MLS 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

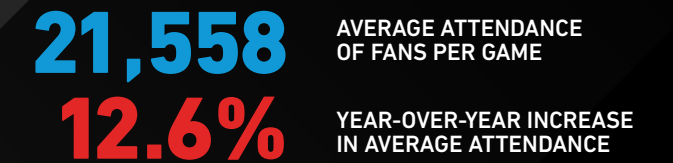


## INCREASED CLUB VALUE

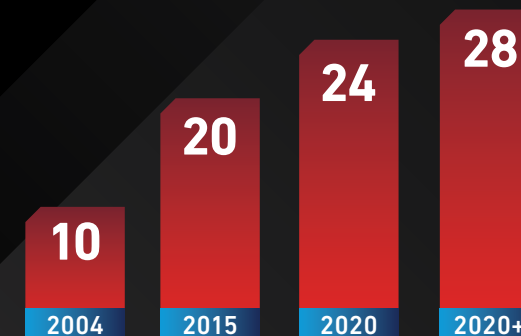


## RECORD ATTENDANCE

RECORD NUMBER OF **161 SELLOUTS** ACROSS THE LEAGUE IN 2015  
28 MORE THAN THE PREVIOUS MARK OF 133 SET IN 2014  
ALL-TIME HIGH OF 10 CLUBS AVERAGED MORE THAN 20,000 FANS PER GAME IN 2015



## CONTINUED GROWTH THROUGH 2020 MLS CLUBS

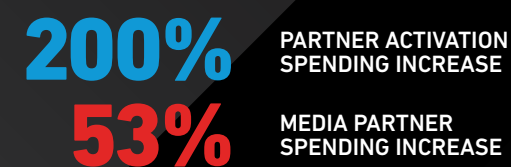


## INCREASED MERCHANDISE SALES



PROJECTED INCREASE IN MERCHANDISE AND LICENSING SALES YEAR-OVER-YEAR

## INCREASED SPONSOR ACTIVITY IN 2015



## INCREASED CONSUMPTION AND ENGAGEMENT IN 2015



\* ATLANTA UNITED FC, MINNESOTA, AND LOS ANGELES FC WILL JOIN MLS IN THE COMING YEARS.





# 21<sup>ST</sup> SEASON OVERVIEW

Major League Soccer is coming off its most successful season, as the league saw record-breaking attendance and consumption, two new expansion teams kick off in major markets anchored by renowned talent, and further increases in social and digital engagement in 2015. Entering its 21st season, MLS is continuing to grow, with more ways to consume content, additional expansion clubs preparing to enter the league in 2017 and 2018, new soccer-dedicated stadiums being built, and more stars helping to build deeper rosters and foster even more exciting play.

## BUILT FOR EXPANSION

Expansion in MLS in 2015 proved to be a success in two very distinct cities, as Orlando City SC and New York City FC saw the second and third highest average game attendance, respectively, across the league. Atlanta, Minnesota and a second Los Angeles team will all join in the next few years, and are poised to emulate that success. With progress being made on an expansion team for Miami, MLS will soon have 24 teams, and the league is expected to grow to 28 clubs across North America in the coming years.

## MORE FANS, MORE STADIUMS

In 2015, MLS fans came out in record numbers. Across the league, each game saw an average of 21,558 fans in attendance — a 12.6% increase year-over-year. Contributing to this success are the world-class venues hosting MLS games, including the brand new Avaya Stadium that opened in 2015 and will host the 2016 AT&T MLS All-Star Game versus Arsenal FC. This year, more progress will be made for soccer-specific stadiums as Orlando City SC puts finishing touches on its new stadium and D.C. United moves closer to breaking ground on a new venue.



## EXPANDING COVERAGE NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY

MLS embarked on the first year of its new eight-year, landmark television and media rights partnership in the United States with ESPN, Fox Sports and Univision Deportes in 2015. Complemented by long-time broadcast partners in Canada, TSN and RDS, MLS served its home markets throughout North America like never before. The broadcast experience in North America will be even further maximized in 2016 as fans will see more weekly programming across all network partners, expanded broadcast windows, and premier placement on high-profile matches. Internationally, new broadcast partnerships have resulted in MLS matches now being televised in more than 140 countries and territories around the world. This year, all 340 MLS matches will be broadcast internationally.

## RAISING THE TALENT BAR

Last season saw an influx of international stars joining MLS, including 2015 Landon Donovan MLS MVP and Italian national team standout Sebastian Giovinco, former FIFA World Player of the Year Kaká, Spanish World Cup winner David Villa, former African Footballer of the Year Didier Drogba, Italian World Cup winner Andrea Pirlo, English icons Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard, and Mexican National Team star Giovani dos Santos. With all of these players returning to the league in 2016, complemented by large-scale financial injections into player acquisition and retention throughout 2015, this season will provide some of the most exciting moments in MLS history. The increased investment in players has already helped draw difference-makers to MLS, including Dutch World Cup star Nigel De Jong for the LA Galaxy, Costa Rican international Christian Bolaños for Vancouver Whitecaps FC and Norwegian forward Ola Kamara for Columbus Crew SC.







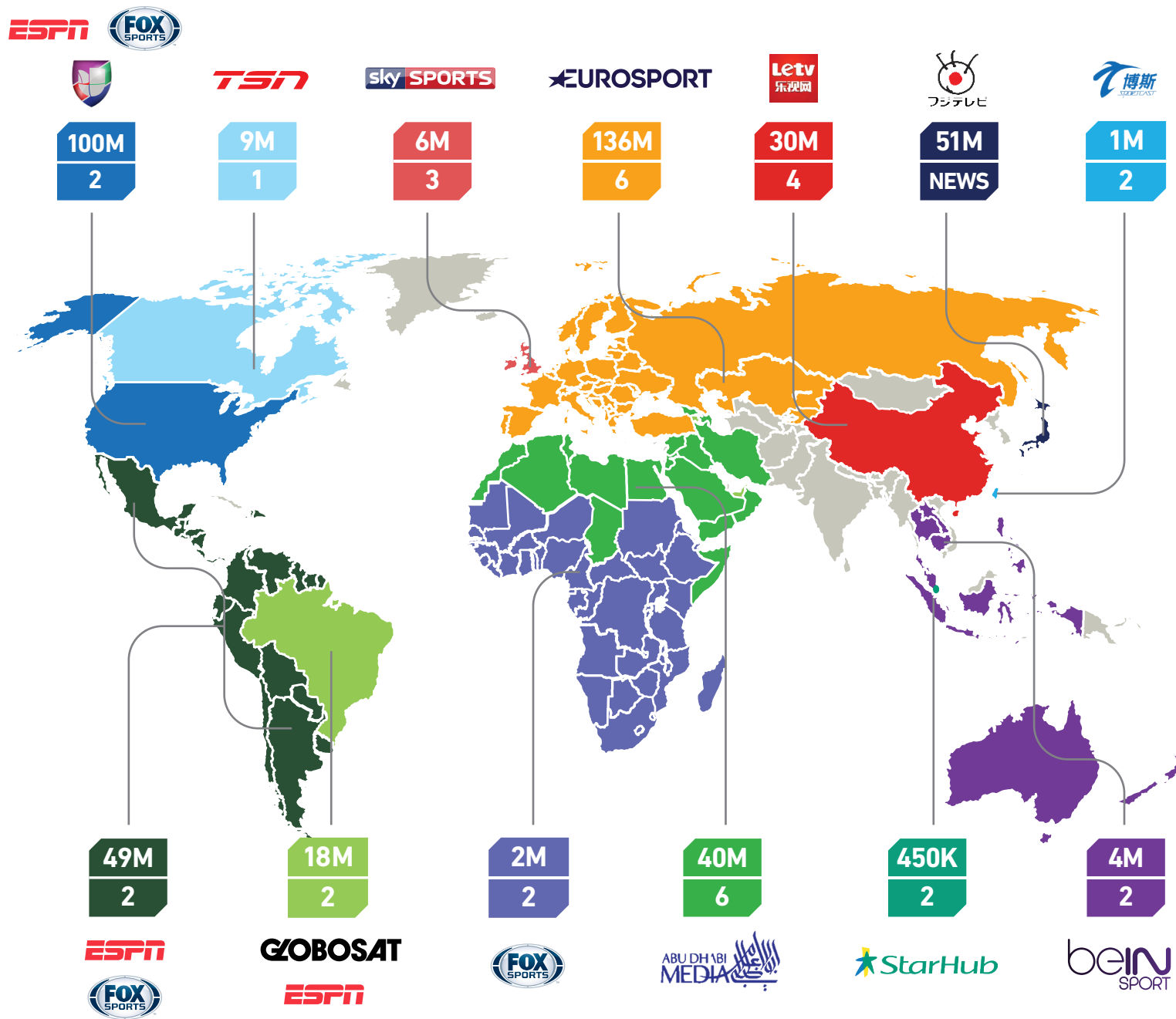
## SEBASTIAN GIOVINCO

Italian national team star and 2015 Landon Donovan MLS MVP



# GLOBAL REACH: +400 MILLION VIEWERS

Key strategic media partnerships have elevated the league's visibility  
**12 PARTNERS, 90 LANGUAGES, 140 COUNTRIES**



## ROAD TO THE 2016 COPA AMERICA CENTENARIO

This summer, more than 50 Major League Soccer players will be among the best soccer players in the world participating in the Copa America Centenario, the most prominent soccer event in the United States since the 1994 World Cup. The world's oldest international continental football competition, this summer's tournament will be held outside of South America for the first time. Featuring 16 teams, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Mexico and the United States, Copa America Centenario will consist of 32 matches played in 10 U.S. cities throughout June.

With global superstars Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suárez scheduled to participate, the popularity of the event among fans across the region and world will be immense, as nearly two million spectators are expected to attend tournament matches and additionally the television viewership of a major global sports event. The tournament will take place in nine MLS markets, including Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle. MLS will have a brief summer break during the group stage of the tournament as the eyes of the sports world focus on this historic event.



**COPA AMERICA  
CENTENARIO USA 2016**

© 2015 Major League Soccer Confidential & Proprietary. Numbers indicate estimated household reach of each broadcast partner in each region, followed by the number of matches broadcasted on the network per week.

ESTIMATED  
HOUSEHOLD  
REACH  
  
# OF GAMES  
BROADCASTED  
PER WEEK



# MLS STARS IN COPA AMERICA CENTENARIO



**GILES BARNES**  
HOUSTON DYNAMO  
JAMAICA



**MICHAEL BRADLEY**  
TORONTO FC  
USA



**CLINT DEMPSEY**  
SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC  
USA



**GIOVANI DOS SANTOS**  
LA GALAXY  
MEXICO



**KAKÁ**  
ORLANDO CITY SC  
BRAZIL



**DARLINGTON NAGBE**  
PORTLAND TIMBERS  
USA



**KENDALL WASTON**  
VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC  
COSTA RICA



**GYASI ZARDES**  
LA GALAXY  
USA





## DAVID VILLA

New York City FC Captain David Villa scores at Yankee Stadium during the club's inaugural home opener in 2015



# The New York Times

March 1, 2015

## Metropolitan

The New York Times



### Whose Side Are You On?

In a Mets vs. Yankees, Giants vs. Jets town, soccer fans now face a choice: Red Bulls or N.Y.C.F.C.?

By JEFF Z. KLEIN  
New York sports fans can be a melodramatic lot, but in January one particular group had become agitated on a whole other

the player's name. Others vowed to boo him when he did finally arrive. One group of die-hards issued a statement saying it "would like to publicly denounce" the club and the player for the delay.



# MLS HAS ARRIVED

Ten years removed from floundering franchises and empty stadiums, the league is talking aggressive expansion and ballooning entry fees



Jeff Kaplan  
Soccer

Don't think soccer in New York is a new thing. The 20th anniversary of the first Major League Soccer game is being celebrated in New York City. The city's soccer scene is booming, and the league is talking aggressive expansion and ballooning entry fees.



Columbus is one of several MLS franchises set to launch a sound on new stadium.

## STREET & SMITH'S SportsBusiness JOURNAL

March 2, 2015

### MLS SEASON OPENER



BY TIM THOMAS

When Dan Garber worked for the NFL, he had a headache made out of Wilson's game last night with a big league logo on it. He carried the ball home every where and it became a conversation piece.

"What do you do for the NFL?" Garber said. "I've got to be talking about his favorite team and how much it would be worth for the NFL."

Garber stated that experience to play out a different life in the years after having named the second commissioner of Major League Soccer in 1996.

"I would like to see people in that same situation on a plane and inevitably people asked what I do, and I'd say I run Major League Soccer," Garber said. "The only thing the owner I'd most often get in contact was with all these kids playing the sport, has never not made it in America."

"Now, I don't get what that question means. It's quite the opposite in fact, and people have no respect for what MLS has become, and that's a real cry from what I think the league."

The coming 20th season might even be the league's highest point yet.

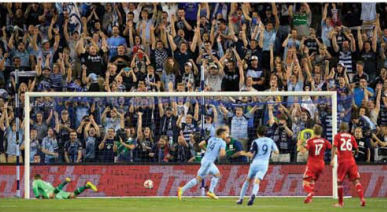
This is the first season of MLS's new eight-year media rights deal with Fox, ESPN and Univision that is priced more than five times higher than its previous deal (see story, Page 20).

Two new teams will join the league, including a second team in New York with New York City FC, and with Orlando City SC, the league's first Southeastern U.S. franchise since the Miami Fusion and Tampa Bay Mutiny clubs were folded after the 2004 season.

The league will announce new franchises in the coming months in its effort to have 24 clubs by 2020, one more, Page 18, 20.

Attendance is also at its highest yet, with an average of 19,148 fans per game.

The club's stadium situations have given



MLS has attracted enthusiastic crowds to its matches, but still must find a way to increase viewership on television. For the first time, which it traveled in September 2014. But while this season will be a season for most recognition of the arrival in the league has made, MLS believes there is much more from television to go.

"Over this time, we have expanded our league internationally with excellent results in almost every market, we have terrific broadcast partners and, most importantly, we have a lot of fans."

# Orlando Sentinel

OrlandoSentinel.com OS

COMPLETE COVERAGE  
**Orlando City Lions' MLS Debut**

## THE MANE EVENT

**SUPERSTAR DELIVERS**  
Orlando City's KaKa scores in 14 draw against NYFC, Page F1

**DREAM COME TRUE**  
Lions president Phil Hershman wishes every moment of debut, Page F2

**INTERNATIONAL APPEAL**  
Electric atmosphere at Citrus Bowl impresses fans in Brazil, Page F3

**MORE ONLINE**  
For photo and video coverage of the game as well as related events throughout the day, visit [OrlandoSentinel.com](http://OrlandoSentinel.com)



Fans cheer as the Orlando City Lions' inaugural Major League Soccer game against New York City FC at the sold-out Citrus Bowl on Sunday.

of "Old, Old, Oh-lando" and surrounded by a standing ovation of 62,500 fans waving their flags and hanging their jerseys from the stadium's goal Sunday, Pat Clarke was no doubt the most excited man in the city. Clarke, 50, is the club's president and coach. He and his wife, Adrienne, have been in the city for five years, and he has been trying to sell politicians, fans and the general public on the idea of a soccer team in Orlando. Clarke, the longtime coach of the Orlando City Soccer Club, interviewed them back in 2010. After the club was founded, Clarke wanted them good luck but pretty much told the two that their American dream was more of a pipe dream.



Mike Bianchi  
Sentinel columnist

COMMENTARY  
Please turn to **BIANCHI, A2**

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Tuesday, January 27, 2015 05

## SPORTS

### Why MLS Is Suddenly the Place to Be

By Matthew Perreman  
and Jessica Homan

First, it was Frank Lampard. Then England captain Steven Gerrard decided to cross the pond. Now Spain goalkeeper Iker Casillas is making his move, departing for Major League Soccer.

"I have no problem saying that I would like to play in the U.S.," Casillas said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal this month.

Casillas, 33, and his team have many reasons to be excited about the move. In the World Cup defense last year, as well as for the Champions League, he has been in the same players that are coming to the U.S. Soccer Federation, who want to bring the sport to the U.S. and make it a major league.

MLS can stay on its current trajectory, or it can begin to be taken seriously. After nearly going bust a dozen years ago, MLS is becoming something more than just a convenience destination for one-time international fans.

"Where we go now, we have the Latin players have always been in the league, but the country that has grown most in the same players that are coming to the U.S. Soccer Federation, who want to bring the sport to the U.S. and make it a major league."

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I have no problem saying that I would like to play in the U.S., said star Spanish goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

He told me he was excited about playing in the U.S. and making his move to the U.S. Soccer Federation, who want to bring the sport to the U.S. and make it a major league.

ALSO: Iker Casillas of Real Madrid City's coach, who is the first of the U.S. Soccer Federation.

# 2016 KEY SOCCER DATES

MARCH 1 – 3

CONCACAF Champions League Quarterfinals – Leg 2

MARCH 1 – 5

March to Soccer

MARCH 6

MLS regular season begins with all clubs playing (10 matches)

MARCH 15

CONCACAF Champions League Semifinals – Leg 1

MARCH 21

World Cup Qualifying; Guatemala v. United States and Canada v. Mexico

MARCH 25

Olympic Qualifier; United States U-23 v. Colombia

MARCH 29

World Cup Qualifying; United States v. Guatemala and Mexico v. Canada

MARCH 29

Olympic Qualifier; Colombia v. United States U-23

APRIL 7

CONCACAF Champions League Semifinals – Leg 2

APRIL 20

CONCACAF Champions League Final – Leg 1

APRIL 27

CONCACAF Champions League Final – Leg 2

MAY 11

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup First Round

MAY 11

Amway Canadian Championship Preliminary Round – Leg 1

MAY 18

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Second Round

MAY 18

Amway Canadian Championship Preliminary Round – Leg 2

MAY 20 – 22

MLS Heineken Rivalry Week

JUNE 1

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Third Round

JUNE 1

Amway Canadian Championship Semifinals – Leg 1

JUNE 3 – 26

Copa America Centenario (ten cities across the United States, including in 9 MLS markets)

JUNE 8

Amway Canadian Championship Semifinals – Leg 2

JUNE 15

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Fourth Round

JUNE 21

Amway Canadian Championship Final – Leg 1

JUNE 28

Amway Canadian Championship Final – Leg 2

JUNE 29

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Fifth Round

JULY 20

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Quarterfinals

JULY 28

2016 AT&T MLS All-Star Game in San Jose, CA; MLS All-Stars vs. Arsenal FC

AUGUST 10

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Semifinals

AUGUST 26 – 28

MLS Heineken Rivalry Week

SEPTEMBER 2

World Cup Qualifying; United States v. St. Vincent & The Grenadines and Canada v. El Salvador

SEPTEMBER 6

World Cup Qualifying; Trinidad & Tobago v. United States and Canada v. Honduras

SEPTEMBER 21

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Final

OCTOBER 23

MLS Decision Day; MLS regular season ends

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

Audi 2016 MLS Cup Playoffs (exact dates TBD)

DECEMBER

2016 MLS Cup (exact date TBD)





